



COUNTY OF PRINCE WILLIAM

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OFFICE OF
PUBLIC SAFETY
COMMUNICATIONS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Charlie T. Deane
Police Chief

Kevin J. McGee
Fire Chief

County's Public Safety Communications Receives "Flagship Agency" Status in Re-accreditation Bid

PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY, VIRGINIA . . . On March 21, 2009, the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, Inc. (CALEA) awarded the Prince William County Office of Public Safety Communications status as a "Flagship Agency," and granted it re-accreditation after a thorough review of the agency's policies, procedures, management, operations, and support services, Captain Ted S. McInteer, director of the PSC, announced today.

The Public Safety Communications Center is jointly administered by Police Chief Charlie T. Deane and Fire & Rescue Chief Kevin J. McGee. Chief Deane said, "Having a thorough review of our policies and procedures by an objective, outside team demonstrates and assures the community that they are receiving highest standard of services for their tax dollar. Further, the flagship designation is a testament to the hard work of the men and women who work for Public Safety Communications."

Chief McGee said, "Public safety response in Prince William County begins at our Public Safety Communications Center. Therefore, it's in our strategic interest to have 9-1-1 and dispatching services function in a world-class manner. Conducting the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, Inc. review of our preparedness and services provides a validation that we consistently follow nationally recognized standards of service. Receiving the "Flagship Agency" designation is a primary indicator to Chief Deane and me that the level of commitment from our staff to achieve world class service was achieved."

PSC is just one of a handful of communications agencies in the U.S., Canada and Mexico – and the only one in Virginia – to be named a Flagship Agency. The program is designed to acknowledge CALEA-accredited public safety agencies that have demonstrated success in the accreditation process. The program also provides other agencies seeking accreditation with examples of best practices on how to address compliance, policy development, file maintenance, and other issues relating to the accreditation process. The Flagship Agency designation is effective for the duration of the current accreditation, which is three years.

A Flagship Agency must meet the following minimum criteria, according to CALEA:

- Must have a minimum of two previous consecutive accreditation awards.
- Must not have conditions or non-compliance issues on the most recent past award.
- Must not have non-compliance issues, or be recommended for conditions on the current assessment.
- Current Assessment Report must have limited file maintenance and applied discretion issues.
- Current Assessment Report must not have issues involving life, safety, and security standards.
- Must not currently be affected by issues that detract from the tenets or goals of accreditation and/or the Flagship Program.

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PSC Flagship Status

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In 2003, PSC became the first communications agency in Virginia to be accredited by CALEA. The accreditation standards were developed with the Association of Public Safety Communications Officials International (APCO), and are administered by CALEA, which also provides accreditation to law enforcement agencies and to law enforcement training academies.

Gaining accreditation is a highly prized recognition of professional excellence, according to Captain McInteer. The Office of Public Safety Communications had to comply with 218 standards in order to gain accredited status. He credited Hazel Colson – PSC's accreditation program manager – and the accreditation team with ensuring that the agency and its employees constantly evaluated their policies and practices to ensure that they were equal to the industry's best.

Once the Commission's assessors completed their on-site review of the agency, they reported back to the full Commission, which then decided, after a hearing and presentation attended by both Ms. Colson and Captain McInteer, to not only grant the agency re-accreditation but also "Flagship Agency" status. The accreditation is for three years, during which the agency must submit annual reports attesting to continued compliance with those standards under which it was initially accredited.

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